

## PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION: THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

*by Arthur S. Flemming*

I KNOW of no area of American life that is more intimately related to local public affairs than the field of education. At the same time I know of no area of American life that has had and will have as profound an effect on the life of our nation and on our work as the area of education.

During the two and a half years that it was my privilege to serve as Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, I developed a greater appreciation than ever before of the problem that confronts us: the shortage in all walks of life of men and women who possess the competence, the creativity, and the courage to deal with the issues that emerge from a rapidly changing and complex world.

Soon after I took office in August, 1958, working through the heads of the operating departments, I invited the presidents or representatives of national organizations with an interest in one or more of the programs of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to come to Washington to meet with me. I emphasized that I wanted them to come not

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for the purpose of *our* instructing them but so that *they* could talk to us and share with us their hopes and aspirations for the work of the Department. As a result I spent thirteen days meeting with and listening to the representatives of more than eight hundred national organizations.

I was very much interested to note this: All who spoke, whatever their basic interests might have been, in the field of health, welfare, or education, emphasized the serious shortage of competent and creative personnel that confronted them at that time and would continue to confront them in the future unless something were done about it.

At a Cabinet meeting in 1960, Mr. Mitchell, then Secretary of Labor, presented an estimate of the manpower demands that would confront this nation during the next ten years. Again I was impressed with the fact that unless we do something about it, we shall be up against a very serious situation because of our inability to command the services of truly competent, professional personnel.

An awareness of these present and prospective manpower shortages, I believe, has motivated our citizens during the past two and a half or three years to subject our educational system to the closest scrutiny in its history. This scrutiny started after the first Sputnik and has continued since that time. As a result of this careful examination we have, I believe, a better appreciation of the strength of our system of education, and a greater understanding of the weaknesses inherent in it.

Personally, I believe that the weaknesses we have identified in our educational system are weaknesses

that grow out of our willingness as a nation to settle at times for mediocrity in education instead of insisting on the pursuit of excellence. This is a situation that we, as a nation, must correct.

Let me give you just one or two illustrations of what I have in mind when I talk about a tendency to settle for mediocrity instead of insisting on the pursuit of excellence. One example is the problem of communication. I think it is fair to say that too many of the generation of which I am a part find it difficult to communicate with one another and with peoples of other nations. On the basis of my experiences in administration in government, education, church, and business, I believe that this inability to communicate effectively with one another is one of our most serious problems.

Everyone present tonight who has had some experience in administration knows the difficulties that arise within groups. It is obvious that some of these difficulties could have been avoided and certain unpleasant situations prevented if men and women were capable of communicating effectively with one another. It is my conviction that in government this inability to communicate does more than anything I know of to undermine the administrative processes.

Why does the generation of which I am a part confront this problem of effective communication? I believe that it is because in our educational institutions at all levels we have been far too willing to settle for mediocrity in learning.

The inability to communicate effectively with peoples of other lands constitutes, it seems to me, one

of the most serious obstacles to the promotion of international understanding and good will. During the last year or so it was my privilege to serve as a member of the Committee on the University and World Affairs, which was set up by the Ford Foundation, and chaired by Dr. James L. Morrill, recently retired president of the University of Michigan. Other members of the committee included the president of the Rockefeller Foundation, the present Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, and the president of the Carnegie Corporation, Dr. John W. Gardner, Senator Fulbright, and others. In a report published a few months ago the committee pointed out the crucial inadequacy of over-all American competence in foreign languages.

During the last session of Congress a joint resolution was passed by the Senate and the House setting forth their conviction that the President and Congress should not accredit to a foreign country persons incapable of using effectively the language of that country. Many editorials were written endorsing this action of Congress, yet we are all well aware the President and the Secretary of State are going to find it very difficult to live up to the intent of that resolution. We just do not have a sufficient number of persons, qualified in other respects, who are competent in the languages of other peoples.

Again we ask: why are we confronted with the problem of effective communication, why this serious obstacle to the promotion of international understanding and good will? And again we answer: because we have settled for mediocrity in all areas of learning including the area of foreign languages.

There is no question in my mind but that as we look to the future we must strive for excellence in the development of those basic skills that determine our ability to communicate effectively with one another and with the peoples of other lands.

Another illustration is the reluctance or the refusal of many citizens to accept the responsibilities of freedom. I think it is fair to say that too many persons in my generation do not understand the concept of freedom which carries with it responsibility, if freedom is to be preserved and strengthened. How else can we explain the unwillingness of many mature citizens to participate in politics, or even to exercise the right of franchise? How else can we explain their unwillingness to accept public office, an unwillingness that grows out of a feeling that such service would interfere with their own selfish interests? I believe that we are faced with such a situation because we have settled too often for mediocrity in the social sciences at all levels of education and that in the future we must insist on excellence in this area, too.

Another illustration is the failure of too many of my generation to develop the creative power so desperately needed if we are to deal effectively with the issues of a rapidly changing and complex world.

Within the past few weeks, Dr. Gardner, president of the Carnegie Corporation, to whom I have previously referred, has published what I think is one of the most challenging books that has been written in the field of education. In his book, entitled *Excellence*, Dr. Gardner writes: "In a world that is rocking with change we need more than anything

else a high capacity for adjustment to changed circumstances, a capacity for innovation."

I think it is fair to say that we do not have, to the extent that we need it, this high capacity for adjustment to changed circumstances, this capacity for innovation. I believe that the lack may be assigned, again, to our willingness to settle for mediocrity in learning, this time in the areas of the humanities and the arts.

It is my belief that we have placed too much emphasis on the part humanities and the arts can play in our leisure-time activities. Certainly they play a tremendously important role in leisure-time activities, but I believe we have made a mistake in placing too much emphasis there and in placing far too little emphasis on the role they can play in helping to develop that power of imagination which will enable us to solve the great issues that we face in this rapidly changing and complex world. We cannot continue to afford this misplacement of emphasis and the process of settling for mediocrity in these areas.

Everyone here knows that I could take illustrations from other subject matter areas. As a nation, we are certainly aware that we have not done the job we should do in mathematics, engineering, and the sciences.

Tonight I have taken three illustrations growing, to a considerable degree, out of some of my own experiences and observations. Whatever the subject area we choose, we all recognize the seriousness of the problems that confront us. How are we to solve them? First of all, in our schools and colleges, we

need to make sure that students strive for excellence rather than let them settle for mediocrity.

Second, we must support the faculties of all our institutions of learning in their insistence on the pursuit of excellence. From my experience in education, I am confident that faculty members, from elementary schools through universities, when left alone, will set the kind of standards that are consistent with the concept of excellence.

Those of us interested in setting high standards of learning must resist the pressure that comes from those who are satisfied with mediocrity. This pressure comes from several sources. Some members of the student body—usually a very small minority—feel that life would be a little more comfortable if they were allowed to compromise with excellence from time to time. There is also pressure brought to bear by certain parents who, though generally subscribing to the idea of excellence, nevertheless feel that educational institutions might relax these standards on occasion. At times, alumni of our institutions, and even governing boards of colleges and universities, feel that exceptions can be made in this or that instance to the rule of excellence. It seems to me that whenever any of us join those who exert pressure in behalf of mediocrity, and whenever we fail to help resist this pressure, we are rendering the greatest possible disservice to America and to the free world.

Those of us who have a genuine and sincere interest in the future of our nation and the free world must go out of our way not only in insisting upon the pursuit of excellence in the classroom, and in

upholding faculty insistence on excellence, but we must also, as a third measure, make sure that our investment of resources for faculty salaries, for equipment and facilities is consistent with our professed interest. It would not be unfair to say that as a nation we have not yet traveled the sacrificial second mile either as taxpayers or as contributors to private institutions of learning. We have a long distance to travel before our investment of resources in education is consistent with our professed interest in the pursuit of excellence.

On the basis of studies made by the Office of Education while I was in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, it became clear to me that during the next ten years we must invest fifty billion dollars in public elementary and secondary education, or an average of five billion dollars a year, over and above what we are now investing in salaries, facilities, and equipment. In the field of higher education, assuming that we obtain from private and public sources what we are now obtaining, we must find an additional three billion dollars in the next five years just to provide adequate facilities and equipment to take care of our increased enrollment.

There is no doubt in my mind but that a larger percentage of the taxpayer's dollar must be invested in public elementary, secondary, and higher education, and that private contributors must make a much greater investment of their resources, particularly in institutions of higher learning, than is now the case if this nation is to make excellence in education its goal. May I say in this connection that



there is no question in my mind but that the federal government must provide more financial help at all levels of education than it is providing today.

As we strive to establish a national goal of excellence in education, I believe that we must recognize more fully than we have in the past that our local communities working through their school boards will, to a very large degree, determine the extent to which our nation will be firmly committed to the pursuit of this goal. As a nation, we still hold tenaciously to the concept that the local community has the primary responsibility for the conduct of our elementary and secondary educational program. It is true that there are certain minimum standards which state governments and regional accrediting bodies prescribe, but the decision as to what the maximum standards will be rests with the local community.

During my service as Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, I discovered that nothing we do in the field of education puzzles educators from other countries more than our insistence on leaving this responsibility with the local government. No Minister of Education from another nation failed to challenge me on this point. In reply to such challenge I stated my own conviction that no other policy could possibly have provided us, as a nation, with as strong an educational program as we now enjoy.

I believe that to be the case; but because we do hold tenaciously to this concept of local autonomy in elementary and secondary education, we must recognize that our ability as a nation to adjust to a

complex, rapidly changing and baffling society is dependent on the willingness of our local communities to set standards of excellence in education. All of us associated with higher education know that to a considerable degree our ability to pursue excellence at the college and university level is dependent on the willingness of communities to insist upon excellence at the elementary and secondary level.

I quote again from Dr. Gardner's book on excellence. He says this: "Free men must set their own goals. There is no one to tell them what to do. They must do it for themselves. They must be quick to apprehend the kind of effort and performance their society needs, and they must demand that kind of record and performance of themselves and their fellows. They must cherish what Whitehead called 'the habitual vision of greatness.'"

I would like to paraphrase Dr. Gardner's comment and apply it to the point I am endeavoring to make as follows: under our concept of the way in which elementary and secondary educational programs should be conducted, the local community must set its own standards of excellence. There is no one to tell the community what to do. It must be quick to apprehend the kind of effort and performance society needs, and then must demand that kind of effort and performance from its educational system and must provide the needed support. It must cherish, as it thinks in terms of its educational responsibility, what Whitehead called the "habitual vision of greatness."

Unless our local communities do cherish this "habitual vision of greatness" and, through our

system of elementary and secondary education, provide our nation with competent men and women who insist on the highest possible standards in all areas of life, the free society which we prize so highly will perish from the earth.

I quote a final time from Dr. Gardner: "The idea for which this nation stands will not survive if the highest goal free men can set for themselves is an amiable mediocrity."

Under our concept of the responsibilities of the federal and state governments as contrasted with local government, the decision to pursue excellence or to settle for an amiable mediocrity, particularly in elementary and secondary education, must be made at the local level. Once the decision has been made by the community, federal and state governments can be of immeasurable help in giving support in order to make it possible for the decision to become reality. If we are not striving for excellence in education at this time it is due to the fact that the local community has been willing to settle for an amiable mediocrity.

This situation brings us logically to the question: What is it that will motivate our people at the community level throughout our nation to demand excellence in education, and to refuse to settle for mediocrity? I do not believe that we will pursue such goals over a prolonged period from fear of another nation. Fear is not the kind of motivation that results in a sustained effort in the direction of a constructive objective. It is probably fair to say that as a nation we have now forgotten about the fears we had after Sputnik I. That first Russian flight

into space did have the effect of waking us up to a situation. I do not believe that the National Defence Education Act would have passed had it not been for Sputnik. If we are going to build on the National Defense Education Act, however, we will do so not from fear but from some other motivation.

Personally, it is my conviction that as a nation we will pursue excellence in education only as we are motivated to do so by recognizing and putting into practice the great spiritual laws of life. We are all aware that at the center of our Judeo-Christian heritage is the commandment: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Many years ago I had the opportunity of reading a sermon by Leslie Weatherhead, pastor of the great City Temple in London, in which he took this commandment as a text. In the course of the sermon he said that there are two things in this commandment we are not required to do: one is that we are not required to *like* our neighbor and the other is that we do not have to approve of everything our neighbor says or does. This commandment, he said, places upon us just one obligation: that is, never to pass up an opportunity to help our fellow human being, whatever his race, color, or creed, achieve his highest potential.

This, I believe, is a spiritual law of life. Whenever we, as individuals or as a society, pass up the opportunity to help one of our fellow human beings move in the direction of achieving his highest potential, we are violating this spiritual law and will suffer the consequences. The decision to place this law at the center of our lives can provide us with

the motivation to make whatever sacrifices are necessary in order to afford the young people of this nation the opportunity to achieve their highest potential. In other words, we must pursue excellence in strengthening our spiritual foundations if we are to achieve excellence in education.

Have you ever noticed how often these days we end conversations by saying, "Well, take it easy"? If you stop to realize the extent to which that expression has taken the place of "Goodbye," which is the contraction of "God be with you," you may be somewhat shocked. As we think in terms of our nation's responsibilities, including our responsibilities in education, let us never end a conversation with "Take it easy." This is the kind of expression that should be used only by those who belong to the cult of easiness. Rather, let us end our conversations with "Goodbye," God be with you, because it is only as we receive strength from Him that we will be provided with the insight, the vision, and the courage to move in the direction of excellence.

(A question and answer period followed the address.)

*Question:* What do you think about Kennedy's Peace Corps?

*Answer:* I think the basic idea is sound. There are many administrative problems that are going to have to be dealt with but I think they can be handled in a constructive manner. I think the Corps can be used in such a way as to make it possible to

promote international understanding and good will in a very effective manner.

You will recall that when this proposal was first made during the campaign it was suggested that persons who became a part of the Peace Corps might be exempted from their responsibilities under the Selective Service and Training Act. I was with Vice President Nixon during the campaign and helped prepare a statement dealing with that aspect of the matter. That suggestion, as you will have noticed, has been dropped and those who join the Peace Corps will be treated as many other young persons subject to Selective Service.

I like the philosophy underlying the Peace Corps and I think we are capable of working it out to produce constructive results, both for the nation and for those who participate in the program.

*Question:* How far do you think government should go in aiding private institutions of higher education?

*Answer:* In the field of higher education, our nation has been committed virtually from the beginning to a dual system of public and private colleges and universities. Unlike the situation in elementary and secondary education, we have never held out to the young people of the country a commitment that we will provide all of them with an opportunity for an education at a public college or university. As a result, from the very beginning, whenever the federal government has made available funds in the field of higher education, it has made them available both

to private and public colleges. This has been a sound policy and one we should continue to follow.

In the field of elementary and secondary education, our nation from the beginning has declared its intention to provide every young person with an opportunity for a public elementary and secondary education. We are a long way from fulfilling that commitment in terms of providing a superior education in public institutions. Until such time as we reach that goal, which will require the investment of billions of dollars, I do not think we have any right to think about using public funds to support private elementary and secondary schools.

In testimony before the House Committee on Education and Labor this week, I did say that I thought it was possible to develop a loan program that would not violate that particular principle. What kind of a loan program do I have in mind? The kind of loan program under which the government would charge just as high a rate of interest as is necessary for the government to pay in order to borrow money; one under which the government would be reimbursed for any expense incurred. It would be a loan program that would not cost the government a cent.

I do not think we have the right at this point to take any of our public resources and use them for the purpose of strengthening private elementary and secondary schools when we still have so much work to do to provide good public elementary and secondary education.

*Question:* Wouldn't federal support and state support in this pursuit of excellence have the same idea or effect as rigid controls over curriculum and other school facilities?

*Answer:* You will recall that I stated it is up to the local community to decide whether it wishes to pursue excellence in the field of elementary and secondary education. Once the decision has been made, the federal and state governments can lend the local community support in order to make it possible to achieve this goal.

Now the question is: As the state and federal governments come in to provide this support, isn't there danger that they will begin to substitute their judgment as to what constitutes excellence in education for the judgment of the local community? The answer is that there is such danger always. Whenever government at any level makes funds available for a particular purpose, there is always the danger of applying the philosophy that he who pays the piper should call the tune. We know that as state governments have provided more and more support for elementary and secondary education they have been more and more insistent that certain minimum standards be met.

Personally, I think this is sound, and taking the country as a whole, makes good sense. But as I have indicated, the responsibility for setting the standards of excellence remains entirely with the local community.

Because I recognize the danger to which you have referred, I favor federal aid to state and local



school districts for capital expenditures as contrasted with making it available for current operating budgets. To be more specific, I believe that the two billion three hundred million dollars which is in Mr. Kennedy's present proposal, instead of being made available to institutions for use both in construction and/or for teachers' salaries, should be made available for construction only, with the understanding that the state and local school districts can use this money to help pay service debts already incurred or to be incurred in the construction of buildings, or for the purpose of helping to construct a building on a pay-as-you-go basis.

I believe that if the funds are earmarked in that way we would do two things: first of all, we would release a considerable amount of money that is now being spent or would have to be spent on construction, so that the local school district could pay their own teachers' salaries (and I regard teachers' salaries as the Number One problem in the field of education at the present time); in the second place, if such procedure is followed, we would make a real dent in our existing classroom shortage. But we would do those two things without running as much risk of immediate control as we would run if federal funds were made directly available for current operating budgets.

I draw this conclusion because, from my own experience in the federal government, I know how easy it is to attach a rider to an appropriations bill. If the government were made economically responsible year in and year out in a local school system, it might not be too long before some member of Con-

gress would become incensed over a certain course being taught; and, if he happened to be a member of an Appropriations Committee, it is possible that when the next appropriations for health, education, and welfare came along, he would offer a rider "provided that none of the funds herein appropriated shall be used for the purpose of teaching course A, B, C, . . . "and so on.

Were that day to come, it would be a sad day for education in our nation in my judgment. Once a rider of that kind gets in, it is never removed.

There is not the same temptation to move in that direction when funds are made available for facilities as there is when funds are made available for current operating budgets. It could still happen, but I believe it does not need to happen if as citizens we are on the alert and insist upon using the system of checks and balances that has been built into our form of government. The danger might be that we would be asleep at the switch and would permit some kind of wording to get into an appropriations bill or into a law that would result in controls being exercised.

I have seen that happen. There is a calculated risk involved, but I firmly believe, on the basis of my own experience, that the time has come for the federal government to undergird the financial structure of our local school districts and our state governments. I hope that we will do it with grants for capital expenditures rather than with grants for current operating budgets.

I think within the Congress, particularly the House of Representatives, if people were willing to focus on making grants available for capital expenditures

we would get a law at this session of Congress. I feel that the time for talk has long since passed, and we ought to get some action. If such action were taken, the local school districts would be in a position to do a better job in the area of teachers' salaries and to cut into the classroom shortages, and we would not run the same risk of federal control.

*Question:* Sir, you mentioned earlier that Americans were exceedingly weak in foreign languages. Do you feel it would be effective to move foreign language into the elementary school level, or do you think that would not be wise?

*Answer:* I am sure there are persons in the audience better able to answer that question than I, but I may say that throughout the country there is a tendency to start teaching foreign languages in the elementary schools. To me as a layman it would make good sense. I would like to see more of it and I think if there were more teaching of foreign languages at the elementary level we would do a better job at the secondary level and certainly a better job at the higher levels.

*Question:* Do you think it would be a good idea for the government to found a foreign service academy on the order of West Point?

*Answer:* This idea has been proposed a number of times during the past 20 or 25 years. I do not

think that we need such an academy operated by the government. I think our universities and colleges are capable of providing the young men and women with the kind of background they need to enter the foreign service. Once in the foreign service, they should undergo a very intensive training program which would be the responsibility of the government. The government could establish this program by means of an academy or something of the kind, but I do not think in the foreign service area that we should have anything comparable to West Point or the Naval Academy or the Air Force Academy.

Our colleges and universities are doing an increasingly effective job along these lines. The Committee on the University and World Affairs, on which I served, made a survey of what is going on at the present time, and incorporated in the report the ideas as to what colleges and universities might do to improve activities in this area.

I think we are doing a good job but I think we could do an infinitely better one. I would like to see the universities and colleges feel they have a responsibility in this line rather than take the position: "We don't have to worry about that; the government has set up an academy to take care of it." After people enter foreign service, they should be put through an intensive training period at the expense of the government. When they have been in the service for a time, they should be given the opportunity to go back and take graduate courses for a year or two to improve their competence in the foreign service area. This program is being followed more and more.

*Question:* As an advocate of more federal aid to our nation's educational system, did you feel somewhat lonely at times in the last administration? Eisenhower did not try too hard to get the education bill passed, and most of the members voted for it although Congress took a dim view of the bills. I am wondering how you stand in the progressive wing of the Republican Party, or is the Republican Party different?

*Answer:* There are differences of opinion on this issue within the Republican Party, as we all know. There are likewise very sharp and marked differences of opinion in the Democratic Party on this particular issue.

Soon after I took office as Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare I recommended that the Administration take positive action in this area, along the lines which I have previously outlined. I could never have been in a position of advocating such action on the part of the federal government if I had not had the concurrence and backing of the President. The program that was set up had the fullest support of President Eisenhower, and was adopted only after a vigorous discussion of the matter at a Cabinet meeting. Unfortunately, up to this session of Congress there has not been a majority of Republicans and Democrats in support of the program. During the past presidential campaign both candidates asked for action in this area, particularly in the field of higher education, and both of them had some support and some opposition within their own parties.

*Question:* President Eisenhower has a unique highway safety program mapped out. Do you expect it to be strengthened or do you think it will be placed under roads and safety?

*Answer:* A great deal of work that took place under President Eisenhower's Administration came out of the United States Public Health Service which is deeply concerned with accident prevention. There is no question in my mind that such work will be continued by my associate, former Governor Ribicoff of Connecticut, and by those under him. If you have followed the career of Secretary Ribicoff, you will know that this has been one of his major emphases in public life and I am sure it will continue to be.

*Question:* What do you think of the idea of putting economic pressure on segregated school districts in an effort to integrate?

*Answer:* I assume you mean to say, for example, that any district that is segregated will not receive federal funds. Let me take one very specific illustration: under a law passed by Congress over ten years ago, the federal government makes available surplus property to both public and private elementary schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities. What then would I think of a law that said: "You cannot make any surplus property available to an institution or school district that operates on a segregated basis." Let me approach the answer in this

way: I wholeheartedly concur with the Supreme Court decision of 1954 which stated that it is impossible to maintain separate but equal educational facilities. I think the situation was legally sound and morally right and consistent with the commandment that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves.

The Court was also wise in deciding to place the responsibility for implementing the decision in the hands of district court judges with the idea that it was up to them to make determinations from time to time as to when the desegregation process should begin and how it should begin. If Congress, then, in the illustration I have just given, were to say, "Effective on the day this bill is signed by the President and becomes law, surplus property or any other type of federal aid may be applied only to integrated school districts," it would be adopting a policy contrary to the policy of implementation as announced by the Supreme Court, which I think would be unwise.

On the other hand, it should be clear that whenever a school district fails to conform to a decision issued by a district court judge, then federal aid should be cut off immediately, as was done in Prince Edward County, Virginia.

*Question:* Do you think that the Court order has resulted in any significant change in attitude in the South, or has it only strengthened the resolve of the South?

*Answer:* Those of you who have had the opportunity of living in the South would probably be in a

better position to respond to that question than I am. In connection with this problem, however, I have examined carefully a great deal of evidence from summaries of significant developments which were placed on my desk each morning during my term in the government. On the basis of these reports I feel that we have unquestionably made real progress in the direction of achieving what I consider the only kind of an objective that this country can stand for. I do not think that the Court order has set things back at all. I think we have moved forward and will continue to move forward.

*Question:* What do you think of the European school system of technical schools and, for the more intelligent student, higher schools?

*Answer:* There is no question in my mind at all but that our system is infinitely better. I do not see how a country such as ours could have moved forward as it has if we had not followed the kind of approach we did.

I do not think feasible a system in which at certain points, oftentimes very early in life, a student is told, "Look, this is the road that you are to travel. You cannot travel this other road." Everyone in the field of education has encountered many persons who, up to a particular point, did not demonstrate the interest needed in order to travel down a particular road, but who later picked up and developed the motivation that enabled them to travel that road successfully.



I much prefer our way of doing things as contrasted with the approach in Europe. Whether in England or on the Continent, there is no way that will surpass ours.

*Question:* One of the greatest enemies that we face today in the education of young people is the inroads of ideologies, whether of the left or right politically. With regard to the fact that we do have to fight desperately against Communism, what do you think of banning certain textbooks on the ground that they present ideology contrary to our own?

*Answer:* I do not like it at all. It is directly contrary to any concept that man has ever developed in regard to academic freedom.

Let me give you an illustration: I served for nine years as a member of the Civil Service Commission, the last two with the first woman to be named Secretary of Labor in the history of our nation. We were called upon to deal with some basic and important issues in connection with the problem of Communism and infiltration into the government. One afternoon when we had finished discussing a particular case, this lady referred to a rather high government official and said, "You know, one of the difficulties we have been up against is the fact that this person does not have an adequate background in the whole area of Communism, and consequently has felt it possible to deal with them in a way in which we really cannot deal with them. I was engaged in a

conversation with him once and said to him, 'Look, I do not believe you understand these people. Have you read enough of the works of Karl Marx to really develop an understanding of these people?'" She said it was obvious that he had not, so she sent him some books to read.

I returned to Ohio Wesleyan as president soon after that, and at a speech to a group of alumni one of the first questions addressed to me was this: Do you teach Communism in Ohio Wesleyan?

I said, "We do, and I hope that we are doing a good job." I then related the story I have just told in order to make my point, knowing that this particular questioner was not too enthusiastic about some of the political figures mentioned and would probably agree that they had not fully measured up to their responsibility.

But the philosophy underlying your question is sound. There is no doubt that in our educational institutions at all levels we must give our students a real understanding of various forms of government and various ways of life, so that they are in position to weigh these matters intelligently. If, then, they are put into positions of responsibility where it is necessary to deal with these issues, they can deal with them with their eyes wide open and with an adequate understanding of these various systems.

There is no question in my mind at all that when we interfere with the concept of academic freedom we undermine our nation. When we adhere strictly to the standards of academic freedom we are putting our young people in position to make a maximum contribution to the welfare of our nation.